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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000414

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SUBJECT: KIRKUK OFFICIALS ON SECURITY, SERVICES, AND TURKEY

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The Ambassador met with Kirkuk Governor Abdulrahman Mustafa Fatah and Provincial Council Chair Rizgar Ali Hamajan on February 5. Other members of the governor's office and the provincial council also attended. The officials thanked the Ambassador for his support of Kirkuk, and emphasized the current problems with security, services, and Turkish interference. The Ambassador told them that he looks forward to visiting Kirkuk before departing post, and invited the officials to present proposals for assistance. PRT Kirkuk and the National Coordination Team have set up several Baghdad meetings for the group to facilitate better relations between the central government and Kirkuk officials. End summary.

Article 140 and Security

¶2. (C) Ambassador Khalilzad met with the Kirkuk Governor, Provincial Council Chair, Provincial Council Member Qassem Al Bayaty, Director General of Kirkuk Municipality and the Governor's CFO to Baghdad on February 5. In a trip facilitated by PRT Kirkuk, the group came to Baghdad to meet with several ministers, and had just met with the Minister of Defense. Both the Governor and the Provincial Council Chair asked for the Ambassador's continued support for the implementation of Article 140 of the constitution. The Governor noted that an implementation committee had issued four directives related to Article 140, and they wanted the process to be fair and transparent. He said that security in Kirkuk is already bad, and is worried that instability will increase. "We need a comprehensive security plan for the city," the Governor said.

¶3. (C) Governor Fatah complained that the Iraqi security forces were both infiltrated by terrorists and incompetent, and said that they operated without consulting or informing his office. He said that he had raised this issue during the meeting with the Minister of Defense earlier that day, and the Minister had promised his support. "Now we have to see what happens on the ground," the Governor said.

Services and the 2007 Budget

¶4. (C) The Governor noted that the 2007 budget for Kirkuk had gone down, from 122 billion Iraqi dinars to 114 billion Iraqi dinars (about 88 million USD), and that this amount would not be enough to begin the major projects needed by the city. He said that he had requested allocations from line ministries to supplement this amount, but the ministers say that it is too late to change the budget. (Note: The 2007 budget is still under review at the Council of Representatives, and it would be difficult for ministries to request more money. End note.) "We feel that Kirkuk is being neglected," he said, although he did mention that the

Ministry of Oil had requested land to build a new refinery. He also said that there was a shortage of fuel products and electricity in Kirkuk.

¶15. (C) Provincial Council Chair Rizgar Ali Hamajan reiterated Kirkuk's needs in terms of reconstruction, and thanked Ambassador Khalilzad for the help that the U.S. has already given. "I tell people all of the time that in the past three years the U.S. has given us three times as much assistance as the central government." Still, he said, Kirkuk has many problems that are not caused by the current leadership. Hamajan requested more support from the U.S., and highlighted the needs of the new university. The Ambassador noted that the university was one of his priorities, and invited him to present a formal proposal at their next meeting.

"We're Not a Turkish Village"

¶16. (C) Hamajan also requested the Ambassador's support in telling neighboring countries not to interfere in Iraq's issues. "Turkish officials want to treat us like a Turkish village," he said. Hamajan considers some of the official statements from Turkish leaders as violating the sovereignty and constitution of Iraq.

Continued U.S. Support

¶17. (C) Ambassador Khalilzad said that he would check on the Ministry of Oil's plans for a new refinery in Kirkuk. He

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emphasized that the U.S. is committed to working with everyone during the process of implementing Article 140, allowing the Iraqis to determine the outcome based on a constitutional process. He encouraged the officials to continue to work with the PRT, and said he looked forward to visiting Kirkuk again before leaving post.
KHALILZAD